

The seasonality of these records agrees with that of the species' southwards shift mentioned above. The regular occurrence of this gull south to Kenya lends more credence to the reports from Mozambique and South Africa, which were also during this season of the year.

What is quite clear, however, is that the White-eyed Gull has disappeared from these eastern coasts of Africa in recent years. The most recent of the far southern vagrants was in 1972, a few years after the Kenyan records quoted here. At the present day, Ash & Miskell (1983) mention the species south only to 10°N on the coast of Somalia, some 1000 km north of the Kilifi–Mombasa area. Furthermore, there have been no records from competent observers based in the Mogadishu (coastal Somalia at 2°N) and Kilifi–Mombasa areas in recent years, and particularly interested in gulls and terns. Interestingly, while the White-eyed Gull has been retracting its range from eastern Africa, several Palaearctic larids, most notably the Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus* and the Herring Gull *L. argentatus*, have been extending southwards into this region (Lewis & Pomeroy 1989).

References

- ALEXANDER, W.B. 1963. *Birds of the ocean*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- ASH, J.S. & MISKELL, J.E. 1983. Birds of Somalia: their habitat, status and distribution. *Scopus* Special Supplement No. 1.
- CRAMP, S. & SIMMONS, K.E.L. 1983. *The birds of the western Palearctic*. vol 3. Oxford: OUP.
- HARRISON, P. 1983. *Seabirds: an identification guide*. Beckenham: Croom Helm.
- HOLLOM, P.A.D., PORTER, R.F., CHRISTENSEN, S. & WILLIS, I. 1988. *Birds of the Middle East and North Africa*. Calton: T. & A.D. Poyser.
- HOPSON, A.J. & HOPSON, J. 1975. On the occurrence of two rare gulls *Larus leucophthalmus* White-eyed Gull and *Larus ichthyaetus* Great Black-headed Gull, at Lake Turkana. *EANHS Bulletin* 1975: 83–84.
- LEWIS, A.D. & POMEROY, D.E. 1989. *A bird atlas of Kenya*. Rotterdam: Balkema.
- NIKOLAUS, G. 1987. Distribution atlas of Sudan's birds, with notes on habitat and status. *Bonner zoologische Monographien* 25: 1–322.
- URBAN, E.K., FRY, C.H. & KEITH, S. 1986. *The birds of Africa* vol 2. London: Academic Press.
- D.K. Bednall, 70 Herrington Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2BT and J.G. Williams, 14 Tyne Road, Oakham, Rutland, Leicestershire LE15 6SJ, England.

Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana*: first record for East Africa

During a visit to Latham Island, Tanzania (6°54'S, 39°56'E) on 22 November 1987, we noticed several small terns flying offshore. The most striking features were their whiteness, small size and rapid wing beats, the last producing a wader-like, direct flight. They looked as small as Little Terns *Sterna albifrons* which are common on the mainland coast, but they were heavier with broader, less slender wings. Black on the wing-tips was restricted to the leading edge of the outer primary. Nine birds landed on the beach for

several minutes giving us excellent views at about 30 m range. They had black bills and blackish legs. All had a black band extending through the eye to the nape, but there was no streaking on the crown. The black band varied in width in individual birds. All appeared to be in adult plumage. They were identified as Black-naped Terns *Sterna sumatrana*. During the next hour they were seen several more times, flying just beyond the shoreline, and giving an impression at times of miniature Crab Plovers *Dromas ardeola*.

The species breeds on several western Indian Ocean islands including Astove, the Amirantes and Aldabra (Penny 1974) and although there are no previous records of this species from East Africa, it has occurred as a vagrant in South Africa (Natal) and southern Mozambique (Clancey 1980).

References

- CLANCEY, P.A. (ED.) 1980. *Checklist of southern African birds*. Johannesburg: SAOS.
PENNY, M. 1974. *The birds of Seychelles and the outlying islands*. London: Collins.

N.E. Baker and E.M. Boswell, Box 23404, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Scopus 13: 123–124, October 1989

Received 13 July 1989

Notes on the breeding behaviour of the Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus* in Somalia

The following observations were made on the west bank of the Webbi Shabelle about 25 km south of the town of Beledweyne, Somalia, at approximately 4°33'N, 45°17'E. The area is characterized by two rainy seasons, in April–May and October–November, and is generally hot and dry with only c. 250 mm of rain per year. The vegetation along this part of the river is dominated by large *Acacia tortilis* and *A. nilotica* trees, with some *Ficus* sp. and *Hyphaene* sp., and thickets of *Salvadora persica* and *Balanites rotundifolia*.

On 26 April 1984, an adult Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus* was observed excavating a hole in the underside of a dead branch of a large living *Acacia tortilis* tree. At the time the hole was perhaps 1 cm deep. On a later visit it was found that the hole had never been completed.

Ten months later, on the morning of 25 February 1985, a nest was located in the underside of another branch of the same tree. This branch was a broken dead stub about 5.5 m above the ground. Attention was called to the nest by the quiet but repeated 'tinking' of what sounded like at least two young birds. A few hours later the tree was visited again, and a young tinkerbird was found on the ground below the hole. Its body feathers were complete except for the head, which was still partly bare, with no evidence of the characteristic red forehead of the adult. The wing and tail feathers were nearly fully grown, with only the primaries still showing a bit of the sheath. The bird appeared to be healthy when found, but was never seen to be approached by an adult, and was dead by nightfall.

The next morning only one young bird was heard calling from the nest hole, and at least one adult was seen entering and leaving. The following day the nesting tree was visited again, but no sound was heard from the nest hole; instead, the fledgling was located by its call about 1.25 m up in a dense clump of *Salvadora persica*, about 18 m away. It called regularly and was seen to regurgitate a large very sticky white seed, which it wiped off its bill on to the branch on which it was perched. Its plumage was identical to that of